1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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who would perhaps punish evil-doers somewhere after death; but no one could say who or where Ispural was, or where the sinful would be judged and punished. It is possibly a faint echo of missionary teaching passed on by bazaar gossip. All Marias agree that the dead are somewhere underground; men, animals, trees, and perhaps rivers and streams have in them *jiwa*, a principal of life, and some say that when a man dies his *jiwa* goes to Pogho Bhum, the sky, while that part which is cremated or buried goes below the earth and is his *kanal*. There is a belief that the menhirs erected at the *kotokal* or *wraskal* increase in size if the *kanal* commemorated by it is happy. There are traces of an embryo belief in reincarnation in the practice among Hill Marias of examining a new-born baby to see if it has the same birth-marks as a dead ancestor and, if so, of naming it after the ancestor if of the same sex, or his spouse if of the other sex. Hindu ideas are beginning to influence Bison-horn Marias; tombs are erected sometimes by the side of the menhir in the *wraskal*, thatched over to protect the dead from the heat of the sun, and with a pot of cold water, replenished from time to time, hung over the memorial to drip through a small hole in the pot to cool him further. But, like their ideas about the earth and the gods, the Marias' ideas about the Departed and the after-life are very indefinite and vary from place to place; it is safe only to go on their actual practice, and not on what some of them will say by way of generalization or theory; the latter are certain to be those who have had most contact with the outer world and persons of other faiths. There is one practical way in which old Bison-horn men show their belief in some future existence. They often choose before death the cow or bullock to be sacrificed when their menhir is erected in the *wraskal*; and it is alleged that if the heir thinks it better to slay some other animal, the animal chosen by the dead man always pines to death. The graves of Hill and Bison-horn Marias are adorned with strips of cloth, spears, fishing-rods and other things they may need hereafter, and their ornaments are buried often with them.

B. Magic and Witchcraft

We have seen before that such is the ignorance of the local Hindus about the Marias that, in the words used by Glasfurd in 1862,[1] 'the simple and unsophisticated Gond tribes are believed to be expert necromancers, and on the most intimate footing with evil spirits'; and that the Marias have a totally undeserved reputation as physicians, although their general idea of sickness

[1] Report, p. 52.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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is that it is caused by magic and best cured by detection of the magician, or by white counter-magic.

Black magic is still suspected as the cause of death by all Marias. Bison-horn Marias consider it proved if, when they return next day to the pyre where they left a corpse burning, they find part of the body unburnt. Hill Marias, through a *waddai* clan-priest or his medium assistant, call on the corpse to impel its bearers to one of seven leaves that represent the possible causes of death; three of these leaves represent the magic of a fellow-villager, the magic of a *waddai* or medium, and the magic of a man at enmity with the deceased owing to a quarrel. All log-gods, whether Maria clan-gods or the various Anga-deo and Pat-deo of the Halbas and Murias, have the power of detecting witchcraft, either by impelling their bearers to the offender (the usual way among non-Marias) or through their oracles the *waddai* (or *waddis* or *waddi*). In previous chapters we have seen witchcraft regarded as the cause of the blacksmith's iron ore[2] failing to produce good iron when smelted, and of the spoiling of the flowering peduncles of the *salphi* tree[3] by worms and grubs. In fact, again to quote Glasfurd[1]:—

> 'The people invariably impute their misfortunes to witchcraft. If a man's bullock dies, it is caused by witchcraft; if his crops fail, it is because the land has been bewitched by someone who is at enmity with the owner; a lingering sickness or painful disease is laid at the door of an enemy, and, in short, from the most common affairs of everyday life to the most serious, every evil that befalls a family is imputed to witchcraft.'

Suspected witchcraft was the cause of eight out of the eighteen murders committed between 1917 and 1923 by Bison-horn Marias and of the two murders committed by Hill Marias; it was the alleged cause in the one Hill Maria and six of the eleven Bison-horn Maria murder cases which I tried between 1927 and 1931 as *ex-officio* Sessions Judge. Glasfurd[1] went on to give details of the cruel treatment meted out in his day to persons suspected of witchcraft; the final test applied to a suspect, even if the preliminary test had been in his favour, was to sew him up in a sack, and duck him in waist-deep water, adjudging him guilty if in his struggles for life he managed to raise himself above the water; he was then beaten by the crowd, his head shaved, and his front teeth knocked out with a stone, to prevent him muttering his incantations. He was pelted with all kinds of filth, made to eat degrading food, and driven out of the country. But, with one exception, in none of the many murder and assault cases arising out of suspected witchcraft which occurred while I was in Bastar and of the previous cases of which I have notes was any action taken by Maria village communities

[1] See p. 176. [2] See p. 168. [3] Report, pp. 32-4.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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eyes; it throws down grass from the roof. But no one need ever be afraid of the ghost of a chelik or motiari.'

During the bazaar ceremonies in the east of the State (when these are performed for a dead chelik or motiari) the villagers say, 'Mahapurub sent you into this world only for a little while; he did not intend you to live with us for long; so don't be angry and don't trouble us'. The parents are led round the shops and then go home leaving the Uriya-bhut in the bazaar. The dead boy or girl is not mingled with the Departed as are the married, and no menhir is erected for them.

Sometimes the ghost of a chelik may be dangerous. In the compound of the Khutgaon ghotul there was formerly a great stone. One of the boys died and the ghost came to sit on it bringing an epidemic with him. Many boys and girls died and the ghotul had to be destroyed and rebuilt in another place. But the stone remained where it was and when the villagers tried to move it sickness broke out again and so they left it alone.

Many Muria say that when an unmarried girl dies her ghost is dangerous because if a witch can get hold of it, she gives it the form of a pretty girl and sends her to rob men of their seed. Such a girl may appear as a man's mother or sister and torment him.

A dead motiari may also continue to visit her old friends of the ghotul. This only happens, however, when the boys sleep outside, for it is believed that Lingo protects the actual building from the invasion of any witch or spirit. The Sirdarsingh of the Chargaon ghotul told me how he once had an encounter with such a ghost. 'She visited me and I went to her; for many days she was with me; I could not get rid of her. I often went to her and my clothes were spoilt with my discharges. At last I gave her a comb and necklace and she went away, but for fear she may return I sacrifice a pig every year.' So too motiari complain of visits from some old lover's ghost: 'he comes to us, pressing us'.

III. The Soul and its Fate

The belief in immortality, or at least in some kind of survival after death, is bound up with the idea of the soul. The Muria theologians say explicitly that a man has two or even three souls (*jiwa*). In Bakulwahi the villagers said that after death one of these souls[1] went to Mahapurub, one became a Hanal and lived in the Pot of the Departed, and the third became a Chhaiya or Shade, a ghost that visited his relatives in dreams and often made himself a nuisance. The word Hanal, as Grigson has pointed out, is literally translated 'The Departed', for it is a past participial form of the Gondi verb *handāna*, to go.[2] Whenever I speak of the Departed, therefore, it may be taken as translating Hanal in original. In Randhna the people said that,

> Every man has two souls: one lives in his mouth and one in his body—you can feel it going *duk-duk* in the chest. The first soul goes from the mouth direct to Mahapurub; the other remains in the corpse and goes with the mourners to the grave. It watches the body being burnt or buried from a tree nearby, then goes to the nearest stream and lives there until the people come and catch it in the form of a fish and take it home. Then it lives in the house as a god (*deo*).

So also in Amgaon, the Jhoria Muria of the Abujhmar foothills said that,

> A man has two souls: one always remains with him; the other, a smaller one, leaves him in sleep and its adventures are what we call

[1] Throughout, when I use the word 'soul' it represents *jiwa* in the original.
[2] Grigson, op. cit., p. 223.

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772 means of a silken thread let down from above. The daughters of Mahapurub slide down this thread when they visit the world to dance; heroes whose 775 brides have been carried away to the Upper World swarm boldly up it. In at least one tale a god, Bhimul Pen, goes to the Under World to dig for roots.

But as Porrobhum is not a heaven where the good are rewarded, so in genuine Muria thought Adibhum is not regarded as a place of punishment for departed sinners. It is occupied by ogres, Dano and Rakshasa; it is an arena for high adventure rather than a place of punishment. Grigson, very properly, mocks at Russell and Hiralal's statement that the Bastar Gond have 'a conception of retribution after death for the souls of evil-doers' who are 'hurled down into a dense forest without any salphi trees' implying that their 'idea of a place of punishment for departed sinners is one in which no alcoholic liquor is to be had'.[1] I do not agree, however, that this suggestion 'emanated from a few Jagdalpur Methodist converts'.[2] The idea is entirely in character; it is just the sort of thing that a Muria who had heard of hell and retribution might have evolved.

The completeness of the divorce between the fate of the dead and any kind of moral retribution is shown clearly in Muria ideas about what happens to a woman who dies in pregnancy or child-birth. The purest and sweetest girl who meets with this unhappy fate is condemned to turn into a horrible succuba until after a few years she passes to Rakasgarh, the land of ogresses, though some treacherous villain hanged in jail may be given every honour after death.

IV. The Intervention of the Departed in Human Affairs

775 But wherever they may be, the Departed are believed to be vitally
769 interested in human affairs. They are naturally conservative and are particularly interested in maintaining the laws and customs of their tribe. Any
[837 breach of the taboos relating to women is specially hateful to them. Adultery
●753] is punished, according to Muria opinion, by some form of dropsy which is brought upon the offenders by the Departed, to whom elaborate offerings must be made before a cure can be effected. So also in a case of murder or grievous hurt peace can only be made between the two families if peace is made first between their ancestors. The ceremonial hunt can be ruined by the indignant dead if a woman in the absence of her husband commits adultery with another man.

769 The Muria like to associate the dead in all those activities which are dearest to them. At harvest time, when grain is taken to the thrashing-floor they throw a little to one side, and later collect and eat it, in honour of the dead. Before they drink they generally pour on to the ground a few drops of liquor for the earth and the ancestors. At every turn of human life, at every prayer that is offered and every ceremony that is performed, the dead are invoked. They are implored to protect the new-born child, to bless and make fertile the marriage-bed, to guarantee the children's dormitory, to save the village from wild beasts, to keep famine far away, to ensure a plentiful rainfall, to make the crops rich and punctual, to bring success in hunting or fishing, to save the honey-gatherer from the sting of bees, to guide the falcon

[1] Russell and Hiralal, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 96.
[2] Grigson, op. cit., p. 224. 'I have never been able', says Ward (1870), 'to find that the Gonds have any real theory as regards an after life, or the transubstantiation of the soul. They seem to consider that man is born to live a certain number of years on the earth and having fulfilled his time, to disappear.'—Ward, op. cit., p. 141.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

755 To divine by chickens, the Gunia brings a chicken to the piles of rice and
781 tries to make it eat, asking it questions all the time. The point where the chicken eats is, of course, the answer to the question.

In matters of great moment and urgency, the Anga Deo from Bara Dongar may be sent for, but this is expensive and wastes a lot of time.

755 When a diagnosis has been made, steps must be taken to avert the evil. There are many different methods. The most common is the sacrifice of animals, rice, spices and smaller offerings. The village may be protected with bits of iron slag hammered into the doors of houses or round the borders. A scapegoat may be consecrated and driven away into the jungle. If a witch or warlock is discovered, he may be persuaded to undo the damage done. If the cause of disaster is some buried image or bone, it is essential that it should be found and properly destroyed. Often what is called in Hindi a *thaa* is performed.

A *thaa* is a ceremonial act based on the principles of contagious magic. It aims at concentrating the disease or danger in some material object which it then removes beyond the sphere within which a person can be affected: it takes the evil, for example, outside the village boundary, beyond the patient's *bhum*. Thus the Gunia may get a flea or a pubic hair from the patient, concentrate the disease in it and carry it away. Or to cure fever the Gunia takes one leaf-cup of cold and one of hot water and seven different kinds of flowers. He waves these seven times in front of the patient and throws them away.

A form of treatment recorded in Masora sounds like a combination of suggestion and prayer. To cure a headache on one side of the head, the patient should find a tree with cross-branches, go there on a Sunday, offer rice and pulse to the tree and bang his head seven times against it saying, 'O Mahápurub, be my friend today and drive away my pain'.

759 Medicines may be used, either alone or in association with magical means.
755 Some of the medicines are probably magical in origin, gaining their power from some fancied resemblance to the thing to be cured, such as the prescrip-
278 tion of the white milky sap of certain plants to promote lactation. I have recorded the following prescriptions:

For epilepsy. Take the feathers, and in some cases the flesh and bones, of a sparrow and offer them to whatever Rau or ghost is believed to be causing the trouble. At the time of an actual seizure, water in which the feathers have been dipped should be given to the sufferer.

For round-worms. The horn of a bison is scraped with a knife and the scrapings put in water which is allowed to stand for a time. When the water is drunk it is believed that the worms are either vomited or thrown out in the stool.

[833] *For impotence.* The genitalia of a bear are universally believed to be a cure for impotence, and Hindu subordinates and others try to obtain these from the Muria, who do not generally require them themselves. Another cure is to drink the powdered roots of the *tej-rál* and *bhoj-rál* plants in milk and abstain from intercourse for a week.

[753] *For dropsy.* This is usually regarded as a sign of the divine displeasure and is a punishment for adultery. It can be cured by the appropriate ceremonies described elsewhere. But the liver of a bear is also useful, if it is found that the disease is due to natural causes.

For venereal disease. This is almost unknown among the Muria. They sometimes confuse gonorrhoea with the burning urine caused by the heat of

your mat to sleep on'. So I had to get up and give him the mat on which we were sleeping together. I was very sorry, but when I came back, she took off her sari and spread it for me to lie on, and I covered her with my blanket. 154

In Markabera the head of the chelik said, 'If my ghotul-wife is away, I dream of sleeping with her. I chase her and often have her'. He sometimes experienced orgasm during such dreams. 'I once dreamt that I was going to dance in another village. I walked along the road with a girl I had always wanted. That night I was able to sleep with her in the other village.'

A chelik at Chandabera said, 'We generally dream of our earliest loves in the ghotul, for these are girls whom we never forget. We dream that they are sleeping by our side or running away from us. Sometimes we dream that we have gone out fishing with them or that we are on our way to a marriage dance'.

The seriousness with which the Muria treat their dreams and the reality they ascribe to them is clearly shown in the precautions taken the following day. I have already referred to various cures for nightmare. I will add a few more. At Bhopna a Muria said, 'If I dream that I have gone down under the water, I consult the Siraha and he says that it means that an evil ghost is coming. This once happened to me, so I got seven different kinds of wood and made a bonfire of them by the bank of a stream. I put some gur and ghee on the fire. Then I and my wife went round it three times, entered the water and ducked below it. We took off our old clothes and left them there on the bank, dressed in new clothes and went home without looking round.' This was rather a drastic and expensive cure. An easier means of averting the possible danger of a dream is this from Chingnar: 787 782

> A dream of a fight between two people suggests danger from black magic. To avert this the figure of a man with a bow and arrow should be made with grass and a bad egg, a pig or a chicken should be offered to it. The little image should be thrown away outside the village and the danger will disappear. [754]

Gatru of Chaniyagaon once dreamt,

> A beautiful woman came to my children and said to them, 'I am going to devour you, because your parents give me nothing to eat'. The next day my children fell ill, and the Siraha declared that their sickness was due to Lagar Deo, who was angry because the customary offering to him three years after the first child had not been made, and he therefore wanted to kill all my children. So I dedicated two pigs to Lagar Deo to be allowed to wander freely and killed three years later. Once I had done this my children recovered. 787 753 782

At Palnar, the Susl once dreamt that he was climbing up a huge stone. Suddenly he saw a chaprasi, he was frightened and tried to run away. He fell down and broke his teeth. When he awoke he found he had fever and only recovered after he had sacrificed a pig and made other offerings.

In Chandabera, a Muria jealous of the happiness of the chelik performed hostile magic against the ghotul. The Sirdar dreamt that one of the boys had died and his corpse was being carried away for burial. Soon afterwards he himself got an attack of fever. He was sleeping at home and dreamt that a chelik came to him saying, 'Come, let us go to dance at a wedding'. The Sirdar replied, 'I am suffering from fever and cannot go'. The chelik said, 'The fever has been sent you by such and such a person, you must drive it

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back again'. Then the boy awoke and the following day sent for the Siraha, who agreed that his illness was due to magic. They then took a pig and chicken outside the village and sacrificed them saying, 'Are you going away or not?' Both pig and chicken ate the rice offered them, and this was taken to mean that the danger from the magic was averted. The boys feasted on the pig and chicken and the Sirdar recovered from his fever. It was generally believed that the chelik who visited him in his dream was Lingo Pen himself.

Naitami Dole, a Muria of Kokori, described an experience when he was the Sirdar of his ghotul.

> One night I dreamt that I was having intercourse with a motiari. The next morning I found myself suffering from fever, so I called the Siraha to ask what was the matter. He told me that an enemy had sent the motiari to me by his magic. So I went down to the bank of the river and made seven circles on the bank putting rice, powdered egg-shells and ashes in them with an egg in the middle circle for the Yer Kanyang. Then I recovered.

To see one's house burning in a dream means that black magic, particularly in its very dangerous form of the *agindan*, or arrow of fire, is going to be sent against one. To avert it a chicken should be sacrificed and a small image made of *dab* grass carried out across the village boundary and thrown away.

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THE GHOTUL AND MARRIAGE

what she was really like, so I went to the house and asked her to lie with me. She asked me what I was doing outside and I said I was drinking in honour of her marriage to me. Although she had been very sweet to me up to that moment, she suddenly cried, 'No, you are simply drinking my urine'. I was drunk and got very angry, and though she tried to prevent me I forced her. But it gave me no pleasure.

Next morning I found the girl was ill. There was no fever or anything we could see, but she lay sick on the ground. I took her to a Siraha and we had to stay with him for a fortnight. I used to give her food and do everything for her, but she got no better. One day I tried to have her again, but she said, 'Wait a moment while I go outside' and she slipped out of the house and ran for her life to her own village. I am sure that my elder wife did some magic to turn this girl's heart away from me. Later I tried to marry another girl, my elder brother's widow, and my wife drove her away also.[1]

VI. Adultery

The Muria have the reputation of observing a very high standard of marital fidelity, and all my observations go to confirm popular report. The incidence of divorce, less than 3 per cent, suggests that they regard marriage as something to persevere in, and while obviously no statistics can be supplied for individual infidelities, social tradition and religious belief are directed towards making adultery both difficult and dangerous.

The Muria, usually so tolerant and gentle, are here exceptionally rigorist. Adultery brings the swift vengeance of heaven not only on the guilty individuals, but on the tribe. A woman's sin can ruin the ritual hunt and in consequence endanger the year's harvest. The vision of priest or medium can be dimmed by the infidelity of a wife, children may suffer and die, tigers may assail the village herds. The guilty pair themselves are visited with a shocking punishment; their bodies become covered with sores and swellings, and a watery dropsy brings a wretched death.

This is no empty danger, as is proved by actual examples. The Solia of Munjmeta told me how his grandfather died of this cause; in Sidhawand, when a man eloped with a married woman, his father died of dropsy and he himself became a permanent invalid. In Lihagaon, one Badru died after an act of adultery. This vengeance comes from the Departed who are the guardians of the purity of family and clan. In Kongera an outraged husband 'set the Departed on the guilty' and wife and lover fell very ill. At Netanar a Muria said that he was only able to preserve his wife's virtue by the help of the Departed whom he constantly invoked for this purpose.

Adultery is suspected when cattle die suddenly, especially if the tongue protrudes and there is a certain kind of watery discharge. The Siraha then

[1] In Indian tradition and folk-lore, the majority of heroes are successfully polygamous—Ramachandra being a notable exception. In the *Katha Sarit Sagara*, the first wife is represented as welcoming her new companions. Suryaprabha married seven wives on seven consecutive days: by his magic powers he was able to divide his body and live with them all at once.—H. M. Penzer, *The Ocean of Story* (London, 1924-5), Vol. I, p. 429. Naravahanadatta had a similar power of self-multiplication (Ibid., Vol. II, p. 477: see also Vol. I, p. 451). Folk-lore wives usually agree—unless they all combine against a youngest favourite. Among Cullala Shah's happy co-wives, Panj Phul helps her husband to obtain his fourth.—J. H. Knowles, *Folk-Tales of Kashmir* (London, 1888), pp. 466 and 483 and compare M. Frere, *Old Deccan Days* (London, 1929), p. 324. There is an amusing note on the subject in W. McCulloch, *Bengali Household Tales* (London, 1912), pp. 318f.

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Sometimes it is supposed that this Mirchuk possesses a man and makes him commit a murder. At Gudra, when Kawachi Linga returned from jail after serving a homicide sentence, a black chicken was sacrificed to the Mirchuk of his victim. But the chicken refused to eat the rice that is always offered to test it before it is killed, and the people thought that this meant that Linga would be possessed by the spirit of his first victim and thus be driven to commit another murder. To avert this danger they sacrificed a pig and a cow, and only then readmitted him to their society.

The Mirchuk, whatever its origin may be, may be employed by a witch as her familiar and servant. She gets control over it and uses it to assist her in her wicked designs.

The Mirchuk is very quarrelsome, and the spirit of a man who has been hanged must not be mingled with the other ancestors in the Room of the Departed, for it is sure to cause trouble. So the Mirchuk is generally located outside the village under a large stone, in an ant-hill or in a mahua tree. At Dhurli we were told that, when Telami Hunga was murdered, his ghost was kept apart, for he was a student of magic and such persons turn into Rao Bhut. For such no uraskal should be erected, nor should the ghost be mingled with the other Departed.

Indeed it is often held that the ghosts of the slain and of executed criminals should not be 'mingled with the Departed' and nothing should be put for them in the sacred Pot in the ordinary way.[1] When the boy Ando was murdered by his uncle Irma, this precaution was taken. Ando's ghost still roams the village, an axe in its hands, seeking vengeance. Irma's ghost is said to have possessed itself of the rope with which he was hanged and people were afraid it might use it to hang the other Departed of his clan or to steal their cows.

It is very dangerous for a murderer to see the ghost of his victim while he is in jail, perhaps because it is impossible there to perform the proper ceremonies of protection. Pandu

[1] Mateer reported that in Travancore the ghosts of executed murderers were regarded as specially dangerous and were believed to haunt the place of execution. To prevent this the executioner used to cut off the criminal's heels with a sword or hamstring him as he was thrown off. S. Mateer *The Land of Charity* (London, 1871), pp. 203 f.

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775 of Chichari described how this happened to three of his
753 fellow-prisoners and they all died. Boti of Telam suffered a similar visitation and was ill for a whole year.

768 In several places I found that a house or a village had been
14 moved from its original site after a murder had been committed there. At Aranpur, for example, the house in which Chewa killed his father-in-law was destroyed, and a new house was built elsewhere for the widow and other members of the family. At Doriras the whole village was shifted from its former site in the year following the murder of Kawasi Boti. Muler village also was shifted after the murder of Rawa Harma.

VI

764 The funeral ceremonies of a suicide are performed in the
762 same way with the clothes and ornaments taking the place of the corpse. When Masa's younger wife hanged herself at Samgiri, her body after the post-mortem examination was buried at Dantewara. Her clothes and ornaments were taken out to a cross-roads and cremated according to the customary ritual. Her scythe, rice-husker and winnowing-fan were placed at the spot, but the scythe was picked up and carried home by one of her husband's relatives. Next morning they went to inspect the ashes and found distinct marks of hanging. A chicken was used to divine the cause of death,
[787] and it indicated that the woman had been angry and committed suicide in a fit of temper. The tragedy was in fact due to the girl's complaint that her husband did not pay her enough attention. The chicken's neck was then twisted, the head removed, split into through the beak and thrown away.

762 In Borgum village, the wife of Markami Pida committed
766 suicide because she was in love with another man and did not care for her husband. The body was taken to Dantewara for the post-mortem and buried there. The clothes were taken back to the village and burnt outside together with her mat, winnowing-fan, rice-husker and sickle. The next day the Priest of the Dead put rice and roots round the pyre. He made seven small piles of rice and brought a chicken saying, 'You were angry and put an end to your life; now become cool and rest in peace here and trouble none of us,